

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES

Minutes of the proceedings of the **OCTOBER POLICY & RESOURCES**
of the **Council** held following the Monthly meeting in the
Council Offices, Advice & Information Centre, Sedgefield, on
Monday 6th October 2014.

Present **Cllr. Gloria Wills (Chairman)**
Cllr. Lynne Dentith (Vice-Chairman) and
Cllrs. Allan Blakemore, David Brown, Mark Cant, Mel Carr, Chris Lines, Ian
Sutherland, Alf Walton, Dudley Waters

Officer Dr Jane Ayre (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs. Rebecca Hagan, John Robinson, Maxine Robinson, Vanessa Carmichael and Tim
Jeanes.

2. Declaration of interest

None

3. Matters of Information

3.1 Community Right To Bid

The Estates Working Group are preparing applications forms to express interest in the Parish
Hall Car Park, Police Station, Fire Station and the Methodist Hall under the Community Right
To Bid Scheme.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.2 Recycling Policy

No further action is been undertaken with regard to this issue at present due to other priorities.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.3 Annual Return 2013/14

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been prominently displayed within the Town from 11th – 25th September 2014. No members of the public have requested copies of the Town Council's accounts. The 2013/14 Audit has now concluded.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information and to close this matter.

3.4 Registered STC Land

Work is progressing via the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.5 Cemetery Lodge

An alarm system has now been installed at the property. Cllr Alf Walton requested that a notice is displayed prominently within the windows of the property stating that the property is alarmed.

RESOLVED:

- i) Appropriate signage will be devised and displayed at Cemetery Lodge.**
- ii) To receive this information and to close this matter.**

3.6 Barclays Bank Mandate

The previously outstanding bank mandate issues have now been resolved with Barclays. The Clerk has met with the Council's Barclays Account Manager and an official complaint has been submitted and is being investigated.

Barclays are now still processing the Bank Mandate relating to the Mayor's Account, the Council's request to access on-line banking and to receive a new debit card.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.7 PRS

The Clerk is to prepare a report for consideration by the Estates Working Group in relation to PPL.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.8 Potential Land For STC To Register

Work is progressing via the Estates Working Group.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

3.9 SCA Lease

The outstanding invoice for BHP Law has been paid. The Clerk has contacted Mr Jonathan Sturgeon at BHP Law and instructed him to notify the Town Council upon receipt of feedback from the SCA's Solicitor so that a review can be undertaken as to the way forward so that no unnecessary costs are incurred. Mr Sturgeon has now confirmed receipt of the SCA's Solicitor's letter, however, he has yet to consider its contents.

The Clerk reported that Mrs Wendy Gill from the SCA has provided an update on the latest position with regard to the SCA's change in status. An Extraordinary Meeting has been held at which members agreed the new constitution and changes. These will now be submitted to the Charities Commission and providing that they do not have any issues it is expected the constitution will be approved within 40 days of submission. This change in status does not have any bearing upon the lease, however, the SCA are keen to keep the Town Council updated as a courtesy.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

4. Public Participation

The Chairman, Cllr. Gloria Wills closed the meeting for public participation.

There were no members of the public present.

The meeting was then re-opened.

5. Reports

5.1 Recording Meetings – Latest Position (Report by Clerk)

Prior to the meeting a report by the Clerk had been circulated to all detailing the last position with regard to the requirements of the "Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014".

RESOLVED:

- i) To receive this information.**
- ii) To adopt the proposed "Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings of Sedgefield Town Council".**
- iii) To amend the Council's Standing Orders to reflect the adopted protocol and in**

the interim the current Section 1(m) is waived to allow the public and press to record meetings in accordance with the new Regulations.

- iv) The Council will purchase audio recording equipment and once installed record all future meetings with copies being kept until such a time that minutes of that meeting have been agreed and then destroy audio recordings.
- v) The Clerk to purchase appropriate audio recording equipment from the recently awarded grant for improvement works to the Town Council Offices and the Parish Hall.

5.2 Training Course: “Paper Chase, Who Can Do What and How” (Report by Ms Jane Young)

Prior to the meeting a report by Ms Jane Young regarding a recently attended training session run by CDALC had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

5.3 Cemetery Lodge: Proposed Workshop (Report by Clerk)

Prior to the meeting a report by the Clerk had been circulated to all which contained a proposal for considering the future of Cemetery Lodge.

RESOLVED:

- i) **To adopt this proposal.**
- ii) **A workshop to consider the future of Cemetery Lodge to be run on Monday 3rd November 2014, 6pm-7pm, in the Council Offices. This workshop is to be attended by all Cllrs.**
- iii) **The Clerk to contact Cllrs to see if they would like to visit Cemetery Lodge prior to the workshop.**

6. Financial Matters

6.1 Monthly Accounts / Income / Expenditure

RESOLVED

The monthly accounts as had been circulated were approved for payment.

6.2 Financial Position: P&R Committee

RESOLVED:

To approve the P&R Committee Financial Position.

6.3 DCC Medium Term Financial Planning and 2015/16 Budget Setting (letter dated 22nd)

July 2014)

Prior to the meeting copies of a letter from DCC dated 22nd July 2014 had been circulated to all detailing DCC's Medium Term Financial Planning and 2015/16 Budget Setting with projections for Local Council Tax Support Grant payments over the period 2016/17 to 2017/18. Cllr Allan Blakemore stated that when setting the Town Council's future precept requests it is essential to factor in the future reductions in the LCTSG whilst also bearing in mind that DCC may in future years not pass on 100% funding as they do currently. Cllrs agreed this is a vital consideration.

Cllr Gloria Wills questioned whether the Council had received its payment of £13,942 for the LCTSG for 2014/15.

RESOLVED:

i) To receive this information.

ii) The Clerk to investigate if the 2014/15 LCTSG payment has yet been received.

6.4 Section 106 Financial Summary as at 17th June 2014

Prior to the meeting copies of the position as at 17th June 2014 with regard to available Section 106 had been circulated to all. It was noted that an amount of £10,500 was listed in relation to land at Thurlow Grange, Sedgfield with a stipulation of being for provision or improvement of open space and or play facilities off-site. Discussions took place as to possible usage with ideas including outdoor adult gym equipment, pond maintenance/improvement and drainage solutions at Eden Drive. Cllr Lynne Dentith asked Cllrs to be mindful of any future on-going maintenance costs which could result from use of this money.

RESOLVED:

The Clerk to find out the procedure for applying for this money and report back to P&R Committee for further consideration.

6.5 Review of Expenditure Payment and Financial Reporting (Report by Clerk)

Prior to the meeting copies of a report prepared by the Clerk and Cllr Gloria Wills had been circulated to all.

RESOLVED:

- i) From 7th October 2014 all invoices coming into the Town Council Offices will be checked by the Town Clerk for accuracy with cheques for payment being prepared. Mrs Julia Rowsby will compile a list of invoices for payment which will then be included in the papers circulated prior to the next P&R Committee meeting allowing Cllrs time to consider this list. If a Cllr has a query regarding any expenditure they will contact the Clerk prior to the P&R Committee meeting so that an answer can be verbally reported at the meeting. Authorisation for payment will be given by the P&R Committee. At the close of**

the meeting cheques will be signed by signatories and posted the following day.

- ii) This new system of expenditure payment will be reflected in the Council's Financial Regulations.
- iii) From the November 2014 Committee meetings onwards the proposed financial reporting template will be adopted showing quarterly breakdowns.
- iv) Work will begin to review the Council's Financial Regulations for presentation to the future P&R Committee for consideration prior to Full Council ratification at a Monthly Meeting.

7. Training

7.1 NALC Larger Councils Conference "Future Local" London 3rd December 2014

Prior to the meeting details had been circulated of the NALC Larger Councils Conference in December 2014.

RESOLVED:

No-one will attend this year's Conference.

8. Correspondence

8.1 Supporting Historic County Flags Day – Thanks from Mr James Moffatt

Prior to the meeting an email had been circulated to all from Mr James Moffatt thanking the Town Council for supporting and participating in Historic County Flags Day when the Council flew the new County Durham Plan.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8.2 Seven Oaks Town Council submission to Government – Parish/Town Councils to be allocated a share of business rates collected by central Government (email 30th July 2014) and outcome (email 5th September 2014)

Prior to the meeting emails from NALC detailing Seven Oaks Town Council's proposal that Parish/Town Councils be allocated a share of business rates collected by Central Government and the subsequent response that DCLG have rejected this proposal had been circulated to all. Cllr Gloria Wills stated this had been a disappointing response from DCLG, however, Seven Oaks Town Council may appeal.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8.3 Sedgefield Residents Forum – minutes of meeting 1st September 2014

Copies of the minutes from the Sedgefield Residents Forum meeting held on 1st September 2014 had been circulated to all for reference.

RESOLVED:

To receive this information.

8.4 Review of Register of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Registerable Interests – letter from DCC 4th September 2014

Prior to the meeting copies of a letter DCC dated 4th September 2014 had been circulated to all Cllrs requesting they require and, if necessary, check their entry in the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Registerable Interests.

RESOLVED:

All Cllrs to check their individual entries in the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Registerable Interests and make the Clerk aware of any changes.

8.5 Election to NALC Larger Councils Committee (email 25th September 2014)

Prior to the meeting an email from Steve Ragg had been circulated to all seeking nominations for two places on the NALC Larger Local Councils Committee. Currently Cllr Jeffrey (Peterlee) and Cllr Smith (Horden) sit on this Committee.

RESOLVED:

No nominations will be put forward by Sedgefield Town Council.

8.6 War Memorial Maintenance – Letter from Mr David Hillerby (26th September 2014)

Prior to the meeting a letter had been circulated to all from Mr David Hillerby dated 26th September 2014 outlining the current position with regard to the Town's War Memorial. A grant application had been submitted to the War Memorial's Trust seeking funding to repair the plaque at the rear of the memorial which is being forced out of position due to the movement of rubble filling which is settling and forcing the back place to move. This work, along with renovation to the Coat of Arms, had been advised by a stone mason who estimated the work to cost in the region of £3,000. This grant application has been refused on the basis that the repairs should come under maintenance and be funded locally. Mr Hillerby was seeking the Town Council's financial support for this work in 2015/16. Cllr Allan Blakemore asked where this project came in the Town Council's list of funding priorities. Cllr Ian

Sutherland reported that the War Memorial belongs to the Town and that the Town Council are its custodians. Cllr Dudley Waters recommended that Mrs Angela Simpson and Mr Hillerby submit a grant application for this work to the Windfarm.

RESOLVED:

- i) Mrs Angela Simpson be requested to liaise with Mr Hillerby to submit a Windfarm grant application.**
- ii) Mrs Angela Simpson and Mr Hillerby be requested to submit to the Environment Committee a report detailing the condition and work required.**

9. Review of Station Road Playing Field Lease – proposal by Cllr Mark Cant (Environment Committee 15th September 2014)

The Town Council entered into a lease with Durham County Council in 1971 for 60 years to lease the Station Road Playing Field for a peppercorn rent of £1 per year.

Cllr Mark Cant proposed that in light of the on-going issues in relation to the Field the Town Council write to Durham County Council withdrawing from this lease arrangement.

Cllr Gloria Wills made Cllrs aware that Mr Norman Holmes of 3 Hornby Avenue had emailed the Council to suggest that Station Road Playing Field could be registered as a village green and thereby retained as a Town amenity. Copies of Mr Holmes' email and attachments were circulated to all by the Clerk. Cllr Mel Carr raised concerns that the Field may not be suitable for village green registration and a legal view would be required on this.

It was agreed by all that the current status with the issues relating to the Field cannot continue and that careful consideration is required regarding the future of this location.

RESOLVED:

- i) Cllrs to consider this issue, and the information supplied by Mr Holmes, in order that it can be discussed at the November P&R Committee meeting.**
- ii) The Clerk to thank Mr Holmes for his correspondence, inform him that it has been shared with Cllrs and will be considered at the next P&R Committee meeting.**

10. Review of Church Turning Circle Refurbishment Project by Cllr Mel Carr

(Environment Committee 15th September 2014)

Cllr Mel Carr reiterated to Cllrs the work that had been undertaken over many months in relation to the refurbishment of the Church Turning Circle, i.e. meetings had taken place with DCC's Conservation Officer, a specification had been drawn up, 3 quotes had been obtained in accordance with the Council's specification, the most competitive quote identified, materials identified and an on-site meeting with the preferred contractor and several Cllrs. The competitive quote which has been obtained is still valid, however, due to increased activity within the building trade nationally this quote cannot be open ended as building materials are increasing in price and in some cases certain materials are becoming scarce/have long delivery times attached to them. Several grant funding applications have been applied for, however, some have been unsuccessful and others will take a minimum of 12 weeks for a decision to be made. Cllr Carr urged the Council to make a decision on how this project should move forward, i.e. funding to be identified from the Town Council and used to secure the services of the current contractor or the work to be delayed until grant funding is obtained and the quotation process to be re-started after that point.

Cllr Dudley Waters requested a further report be brought to Council summarizing the work undertaken to date in relation to this matter. Cllrs Gloria Wills and Mel Carr replied that all work undertaken to date in relation to this project had been brought back at every stage to the Environment Committee and had been documented accordingly. Cllr Lynne Dentith asked how much money was in the Town Council's reserves. Cllr Gloria Wills referred Cllrs to the 2013/14 Town Council accounts which had been signed off by Council earlier in the year.

Cllr Gloria Wills proposed the Council accept the current quote and commission the contractor to start to undertake this refurbishment project with the Town Council using money from its reserves. This was seconded by Cllr Mark Cant.

Cllr Ian Sutherland proposed that a further report be prepared and brought back to Council the following week for a decision to be made. This was seconded by Cllr Dudley Waters.

Following a vote it was agreed to accept the current quote and commission the contractor to start to undertake this refurbishment project with the Town Council using money from its reserves.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Clerk to issue the contractor with an order number.**

- ii) The Clerk to re-issue to all Cllrs the Town Council's 2013/14 Final Accounts for information.**
- iii) Cllr Mel Carr and the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the contractor to progress this work and to keep the Environment Committee informed (Note: This will include appropriate liaison with the Church).**
- iv) The Clerk to instruct Mrs Angela Simpson to begin looking at funding opportunities to improve/renew the paths across the village green from the Church Turning Circle.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.20p.m.